

State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

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Situation Report for August 11, 2007

(issued @ 1500 hrs.)



2007 FIRES

Report Includes:

- Background Information
 - Fire Restrictions & Closures
 - Air Quality
 - Road Closures/Travel Restrictions
- Current Incident Situation
- New Large Fires
- Weather
- State Declarations
- Local & Tribal Declarations
- Local Government & Tribal Emergency Operations
- Requests for State Financial Assistance
- Fire Management Assistance Grants
- EMAC Resources Committed
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Important Websites:

State of Montana Fire Information:

<http://mt.gov/fire.asp>

National Interagency Fire Center

http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm

Northern Rockies Coordination Center

<http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/>

I. Background Information

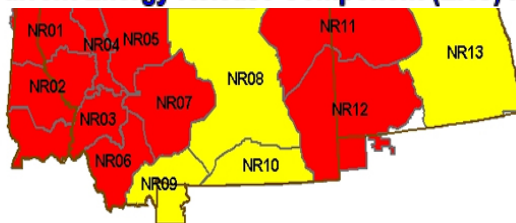
Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture. Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied some of these fronts but a return to a high pressure system mitigates any moisture that fell.

The current weather forecast projects a continuation of high pressure systems through August and possibly into September.

The ERC map, (right) is an indication of the potential "heat release" from wildfires.

Yellow indicates "Above Normal" and Red indicates "Much Above Normal".

Current Energy Release Component (ERC) Map



Inquiries regarding contracting fire equipment and other fire resources, should be directed to the interested party's local dispatch center or Geographic Area Coordination Center, see: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcg/agree-contract/signup.html>

Fire Restrictions & Closures: Portions of the state are currently under Stage I or Stage II Fire Restrictions. For definitions of these restrictions, see:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stageI.pdf>

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stageII.pdf>

Fire Restrictions in Effect (for specific areas):

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/index.html>

Air Quality & Smoke: The Montana Department of Environmental Quality issues a daily forecast and discussion of potential smoke impacts throughout the state. The forecast can be accessed at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/fireupdates/index.asp>.

Road Closures & Travel Restrictions: <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/reports/alerts.shtml>

Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

[Current Fire Restrictions](#)

[Drought & Fire Updates](#)

[Drought & Fire News](#)

Department of Revenue

<http://mt.gov/revenue/forindividuals/taxrelieffordisaster.asp>

Department of Agriculture

<http://agr.mt.gov/crops/hayFirst.asp>

II. Current Incident Situation - Incidents listed according to current NRCG priority. *(This report includes summary information for Montana fires that are currently greater than 100 acres in size. Fires are being dropped from this report once they reach 100% containment)*

The Northern Rockies Coordination Center (Missoula) has assigned an Area Command Team (Zimmerman) to help analyze assessments for long duration fires and emerging incidents.

Jocko Lakes started on the CSKT lands (Flathead Agency, BIA), twenty-six miles NE of Missoula; 8 miles W of Seeley Lake. Wilcox's Type 1 IMT is in command of the incident. The Jocko Lakes Fire is **19,330 acres and 10% contained**. Personnel assigned: **609**. Cause: Lightning. Community of Seeley Lake, surrounding area, Pyramid Lumber Mill and cell tower are threatened. Evacuations of residents and campgrounds remain in effect. Traffic restrictions are in effect for HWY 83 between Clearwater Junction to Summit. Recreational activities on area lakes are restricted. American Red Cross Shelter is open in Bonner. Structures (8) have been lost. Regular community meetings are being held.

Chippy Creek, is located forty-two miles southwest of Kalispell, and 24 miles N of Thompson Falls, MT (Northwestern Land Office, Montana DNRC). Raley's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Bennett's Type 1 IMT has been ordered. Size is **59,029 acres and is 15% contained**. Personnel assigned: **516**. Cause: Under Investigation. Numerous homes remain threatened. Evacuations remain in effect for Hubbard Reservoir, Niarada and north portion of Lonepine areas. Area closures of Mill Creek, Basso, Big Rock, Chippy and Bear Creek drainages remain in effect as well as near by roads.

Skyland is located on the Flathead NF near Summit. Pendleton's Type 1 IMT is assigned. Fire is **39,150 acre with 36% containment**. Fire has burned about **9,312 acres** on the Blackfeet Nation. Personnel assigned: **948**. Cause: Lightning. Two structures are confirmed lost. Numerous residences in the Highway 2 Corridor remain threatened. Campgrounds and trail closures remain in effect. Evacuations are in effect for residential area between Two Medicine Creek and Little Badger (Blackfeet Reservation). Evacuation notices have been issued for East Glacier. Temporary restrictions for HWY 2 (speed limit) remain in effect.

Ahorn Fire on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County is being managed by Whitney's Type 1 Team. Current size is estimated at **44,150 acres** and is **5% contained**. Personnel Assigned: **335**. Cause: Lightning. Several residences and guest ranches remain threatened. Evacuation of the Benchmark area and road closure for Beaver Willow Road remains in effect.

Sawmill Complex is located on the Lolo NF. The complex includes a total of **21,000 acres with 5% containment** and consists of the Sawmill Creek, the Wyman #2, and the Fisher Point fires. Heintz's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: **529**. Cause: Lightning. Numerous residences and other structures remain to be threatened. Restrictions are in effect for hiking, camping and fishing within the closed section of Rock Creek drainage. Road closures for parts of Rock Creek Road are in effect. WMZ (Turman) T2 IMT has been ordered to replace Heintz' IMT.

Brush Creek is located on the Flathead NF, twenty-five miles west of Whitefish, MT. Brush Creek is **22,928 acres with 15% containment**. Koehler's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: **415**. Cause: Lightning. Residences and outbuildings remain threatened. Good Creek community may be evacuated if the fire continues growing.

Tin Cup is 4 miles west of Darby. Kaage's Type 2 IMT is assigned. The Tin Cup Fire is **608 acres and 80% contained**. Personnel assigned: **308**. Cause: Under Investigation. Structures are threatened. Numerous residences remain threatened. Stage 1 evacuations are in effect for 84 homes. American Red Cross Shelter is open in Darby. Minimal fire behavior observed yesterday.

Rombo Mountain, Bitterroot NF. Eighteen miles south of Darby, MT. Svalberg's Fire Use Management Team is assigned. Estimated size is **3,400 acres; 0% containment**. Personnel assigned: **171**. Cause: Lightning. Residences, Painted Rocks State Park and other commercial property remain threatened. Precautionary evacuation notices (stage 1) have been issued. Area closures remain in effect for areas around Rombo Mountain and W of West Fork Road.

Fool Creek on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests in Lewis and Clark County, approximately 30 miles NW of Choteau. Fire is now **32,365 acres; with 0% containment.** Personnel assigned: **142.** Cause: Lightning. Larsen's Type III Team is assigned. Several outbuildings, including a ski resort remain threaten. Evacuations and road closures remain in effect. Structure protection plans are implemented on the structures in Massey Tract, 7 Lazy P Ranch and Teton Pass Ski Area.

Meriwether located on the Helena National Forest in and around the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness. Oltrogge's Type 1 IMT's is managing this fire. Current size is estimated at **41,314 acres with 65% containment.** Personnel Assigned: **387.** Cause: Lightning. Residences, outbuildings and powerlines remain threatened. Holter Lake Recreation Area Campground is opened.

Lost Creek Fire is located on the Crow Reservation, approximately 6 miles SE of Pryor, MT. The fire is currently 315 acres, with 0% containment. A Type 3 Incident Management organization is in place. Personnel assigned: 57. Extreme fire behavior with spotting observed.

* **Jones** - This fire is located 10 miles SE of Miles City, MT. Size is estimated at 1,000 acres; no report on containment. Type 4 organization assigned; with 6 personnel. Structures are threatened. Fire driven fire.

* **Wicked Creek** - This fire is located 27 miles S of Livingston, and 10 miles SE of Emigrant, MT. Size is estimated at 150 acres; 0% containment. Type 3 IC (Fry) is assigned; with 25 personnel. One private in-holding (1 primary and 2 outbuildings) is threatened.

* **Goodale** - This fire is 54 miles SW of Miles City, MT. Size is 500 acres; 0% containment. A Type 4 IC is assigned; with 7 personnel. One primary residence is threatened. Fire is wind driven.

Pattengail Creek on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF. 10 miles NE of Wisdom. The Pattengail Creek Fire is **3,910 acres and 25% contained.** Type 3 Incident Organization. Personnel assigned: **63.** Cause: Lightning. No structures threatened.

Conger Creek on the Lolo National Forest, 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is **7,500 acres with 0% containment.** Type 3 Incident Organization. 13 outbuildings are threatened. Personnel Assigned: 12. Cause: Lightning. The Conger Creek Fire exhibited little growth yesterday.

Garceau is located on the Flathead Indian Reservation, 11 miles SW of Polson, MT. Morigeau's Type 3 IMT is assigned. The fire is now **3,045 acres and 97% contained.** Personnel assigned: **72.** Cause: Lightning. No structures threatened. Satellite imagery indicated increased fire activity yesterday (within containment lines).

* ***NEW FIRES (Emerging Extended Attack Fires over 100 acres in size)***

For more information on Montana Fires: <http://www.inciweb.org/state/27/> .

The InciWeb.org website has disappeared completely. If it does not re-surface today, we will remove this link from the SECC Situation Report.

III. Weather

Daily Outlook –Saturday, 11 Aug 2007

Synopsis: An upper level trough and associated cold front will continue to push east across North Dakota. Thunderstorms should continue to move east out of North Dakota later in the morning with windy and somewhat cooler conditions to follow. Cooler temperatures and higher humidity also expected across eastern Montana. Meanwhile, western locations will be dry with warming temperatures and a lowering humidity trend. Isolated dry thunderstorms should be confined to east central Idaho and southwest Montana providing a risk of brief erratic winds.

Fire Weather Impacts: Lighter winds across Idaho and Montana should reduce risk of wind driven fire spread.

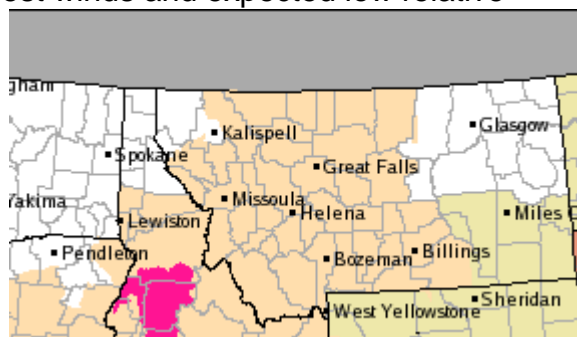
Large Fire Risk: Recent days lightning will likely pose opportunity for new hold over starts as critical fuel dryness remains across Idaho and Montana.

Red Flag Warnings or Fire Weather Watches:

Today, the National Weather Service has issued “Fire Weather Watch(es)” covering most of the state. The watches are for ... gusty southwest winds and expected low relative humidities... creating another potentially hazardous fire weather situation...

Definitions of a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning:

A fire weather watch or red flag warning is issued when the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions support extreme fire danger. These products are written for land and fire managers to highlight the increased fire danger.



A fire weather watch is issued up to 72 hours before the above conditions are expected to occur.

A red flag warning is issued when the conditions above are occurring or expected to occur within the next 24 hours. <http://www.weather.gov/>

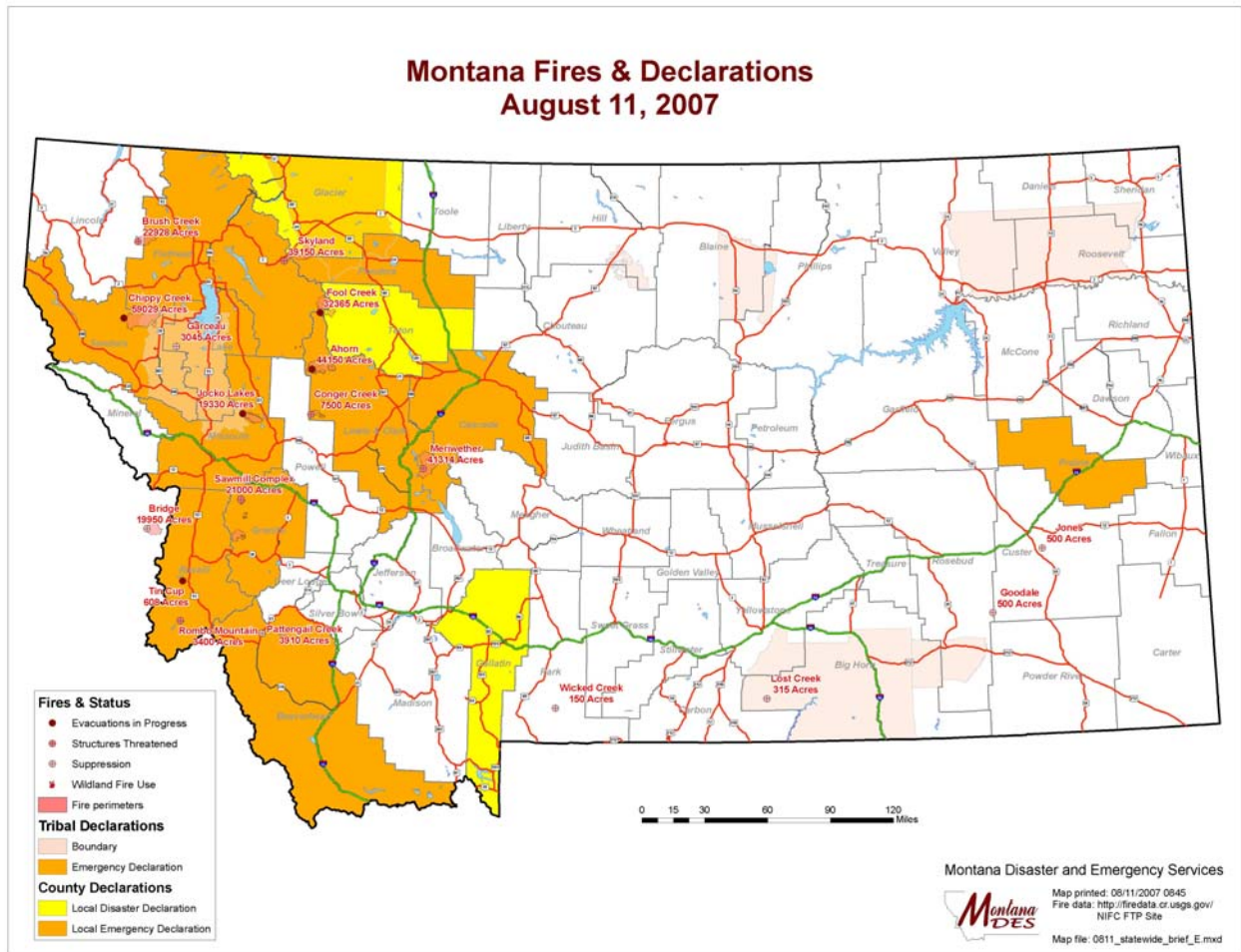
Weather Forecast For current Fire Weather Predictions, see the Daily Outlook at:
http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily_outlook.pdf

Fire Behavior Forecast For current Fire Behavior Predictions, see:
http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior.pdf

IV. State Declarations

- Statewide Declaration of a Wildland Fire Emergency

V. Local and Tribal Declarations



- **State of Emergency.** The following jurisdictions have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark
Lake
Cascade
Flathead
Prairie
Pondera

Ravalli
Granite
Missoula
Sanders
Beaverhead
Blackfeet Nations

- **Disaster Declaration.** The following jurisdictions have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton
Glacier

Gallatin

VI. Jurisdictional Emergency Operations

- The Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operation Center was activated on July 19, 2007.
- The Blackfeet Nation has activated and staffed their Emergency Operations Center (7/30/07).
- The Glacier County Emergency Operations Center was activated on July 30, 2007. (Glacier Co. EOC is actually co-located with the Blackfeet Nation's EOC.)
- The Flathead County Emergency Operations Center was activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Teton County Emergency Operations Center was activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Pondera County Emergency Operations Center was partially activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Missoula County Emergency Operations Center is mobile and working in the Seeley Lake area effective 8/4/07. Missoula County has put a call center in place for public information. The phone number is 406-258-3680.
- The Ravalli County Emergency Operations Center has been activated as of 8/6/07.

VII. Requests for State Financial Assistance

- N/A

VIII. Fire Management Assistance Grants

- Jocko Lakes FEMA-2718FM-MT approved 8/4/07

IX. Emergency Management Assistance Compact Resources Committed

- EMAC A Team is assigned to the MT State Emergency Coordination Center.
- Two HEMWTT aviation refuelers from Colorado National Guard to support the Montana Army National Guard have arrived in Helena.

X. Summary of State Resources Committed (through the SECC)

- MT-DES currently has two employees deployed with Incident Management Teams (through the Northern Rockies Coordination Center).
- MT-DES has deployed an Agency Representative to the Blackfeet Indian Reservation Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk modules have been deployed for initial attack to:
 - Kalispell
 - Missoula
 - Helena
- One Montana Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook and module has been deployed to assist Oltrogge's Type 1 Team with fire support on the Meriwether Fire.
- Montana Army National Guard Security Teams (28 personnel each) have been

assigned to:

- Meriwether Fire
 - Sawmill Complex
 - Jocko Lake (2 teams)
 - Fool Creek Fire
- Montana Highway Patrol resources are assigned (as requested) to assist in traffic control and law enforcement support of large fires.
- Starting on July 20, 2007, at 0700 the SECC was staffed and activated to a Level III status with extended hours (0700-1900), seven days a week . The SECC remains at Level III. Outside of those hours, the MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.